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Security Council

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Letter dated 17 October 2006 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council which will be held on Thursday, 19 October 2006, regarding the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

(*Signed*) Dr. Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

06-57890 (E) 191006

United Nations S/2006/828

Security Council

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19 October 2006
English
Original: French

Interim report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic subsequent to the press statement of 7 July 2006 by the President of the Council

I. Introduction

1. In his press statement of 7 July 2006 (SC/8771/AFR/1406), the President of the Security Council requested me to submit to the members of the Council, in October 2006, a report on the situation in the Central African Republic. This report is submitted in accordance with that request. It summarizes the situation in the country, with particular reference to the political, security, military and socio-economic aspects and to human rights.

II. The political situation

2. Since my last report, dated 27 June 2006 (S/2006/441), the Head of State of the Central African Republic, General François Bozizé, issued an invitation on 28 July 2006 to all the country's political groups and social strata to take part in a dialogue on peace and security. The participants unanimously agreed that lack of security was the chief cause of the slowdown in economic activity and trade, and that it was holding back development.

3. During the three-month period under review, disagreements persisted within many of the political parties, chiefly as a result of crises in leadership and reorganization. The Minister of the Interior, who is responsible for internal security, issued a circular on 3 August 2006 prohibiting access to the media for political parties prey to internal division, because of the "risk to public order arising from the insulting and discourteous statements being made by the various camps". On the same occasion, he set a time limit of three months for political organizations with dual leadership to come forward with a single set of leaders, under pain of suspension. The Minister's injunction was perceived by the political class as interference by the executive in their internal affairs.

4. At the request of the Minister of the Interior and with the consent of the leaders of the parties concerned, on 21 August 2006 the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) organized a meeting to clarify the terms of the circular. The discussions were also attended by the Chairperson of the committee responsible for monitoring the outcome of the national dialogue, and by journalists and representatives of the diplomatic

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community. The discussions helped to dispel tension, both within the parties themselves and between the Minister and the parties.

5. The participants made a recommendation to the executive to refrain from interfering in the affairs of the political parties, and instead to make the political, security and socio-economic environment part of its own official agenda, so as to preserve the democratic gains already made. They also agreed: (a) to prepare a text to put into effect the order relating to political parties and the status of the opposition; (b) to refrain from using the media to disseminate insulting comments likely to stir up hatred or to create an unhealthy political climate; and (c) to observe discipline in their parties by strictly applying their rules and regulations.

6. For his part, the Minister of the Interior urged the political organizations concerned to comply with the laws and regulations governing their existence and functioning. The participants were satisfied with the outcome of the discussion and asked BONUCA to organize similar meetings on a regular basis, since they were helpful in bringing about a peaceful and sustainable climate for social and political organization.

7. During the same period the Constitutional Court, pursuant to a request lodged by the President of the National Assembly for an advisory opinion on the holding of several mandates, decided on 25 August 2006 that "the office of an elected Member of Parliament is completely incompatible with any other function of the executive, and such person, if he or she opts to fill any post other than that of an elected member of the legislature, shall be replaced de jure by a substitute, who shall be at liberty either to resign the office or to exercise it until the end of the legislative period". This decision affected three cabinet ministers, one of whom preferred to resign from the Government.

III. Military and security situation

8. The lack of security continues to be a major concern in the Central African Republic. Although the security situation in the capital has stabilized to some extent, aside from incidents of armed robbery and other offences the situation in the interior of the country is still precarious, particularly in the north and centre, where roadblockers, armed bands and rebels continue to prey on the civilian population, for example by kidnapping the children of herdsmen for ransom and attacking traders on the main highways.

9. The attack launched at the end of June by armed groups against an outpost of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) and the Multinational Force (FOMUC) of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) in the town of Gordil, in the north-western part of the country, near the Central African Republic/Chad/Sudan border triangle, resulted in deaths and injuries on both sides. The attack confirms that rebel groups are operating in the north of the Central African Republic and that the area of insecurity is gradually expanding from the north-west towards the north-east, mainly from the Ouham and Ouham Pendé prefectures towards the Vakaga region bordering on Darfur in the Sudan.

10. The recent relative calm in the region during the rainy season could come to an end with the imminent return of the dry season, which might lead to renewed attacks and other actions by the armed groups. The uncertainty surrounding the electoral

process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is an added source of concern. If that situation took a turn for the worse, the Central African Republic would not be able to deal with the resulting influx of Congolese crossing the Oubangui or Ouaka rivers.

11. Until the current reorganization process has been completed and operational capability in the field has been strengthened, the Central African Armed Forces will continue to be supported by FOMUC, whose mandate has been extended until June 2007. Plans have been made for the transfer of responsibilities. The reorganization of the defence and security forces is still at an early stage and requires a strong commitment from donors.

12. At the subregional level, despite some progress, the security situation of the Central African Republic continues to be precarious, aggravated by the situation in the neighbouring countries, particularly Chad and Sudan. The Government of the Central African Republic is still threatened by rebels and armed bands established along the border with Chad and Sudan. The Head of State of the Central African Republic himself has publicly acknowledged that "security is seriously threatened in the northern part of the country, which is virtually living under occupation, posing a grave threat to the integrity of the national territory". He made an urgent appeal to the international community to help his country find a suitable solution to that situation.

13. The recent rapprochement between Sudan and Chad, as evidenced by the agreement of 26 July 2006, signed by the Heads of State of those two countries, is encouraging. Nonetheless, the renewed hostilities in eastern Chad in September 2006 and in Darfur, together with the presence of rebels and armed groups in Central African territory, are discouraging hopes for a lull in the conflict. This pernicious climate is unlikely to help improve the security situation in the Central African Republic.

14. Follow-up to and implementation of the recommendations made in the context of the tripartite Cameroon/Central African Republic/Chad initiative on cross-border security, facilitated by BONUCA, are continuing. In that context, the Governments of Cameroon and the Central African Republic signed an agreement on 24 August 2006, in Bangui, establishing a standing joint commission to combat cross-border crime.

15. Furthermore, the special summit meeting of CEMAC, held in N'djamena on Monday, 7 August 2006, mandated President Omar Bongo Ondimba, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Central African Republic, and President Denis Sassou Nguesso, current Chairman of the African Union, to study ways and means of addressing the security problem in the Central African Republic, in particular in the north-eastern part of the country.

16. A subregional approach to resolving the crisis in the Central African Republic and promoting its long-term stabilization should continue to be given preference. I therefore associate myself with the decision by which the Security Council, in its resolution 1706 (2006) of 31 August 2006 on the Sudan, encourages "addressing regional security issues". In that context, I should like to note that Presidents Bozize and Déby Itno support the deployment of United Nations troops along their borders with the Sudan.

IV. Humanitarian situation/operational activities for development

17. Roadblocking and confrontations between the regular army and rebel groups have had a negative impact on the humanitarian situation and operational activities for development, especially in the north-western and north-eastern parts of the country. United Nations humanitarian missions in these areas have been unable to operate outside the urban centres because of the insecurity created by roadblockers, rebels and other armed groups.

18. United Nations agencies have continued to provide support to the Government under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2004-2006. Their interventions have highlighted good governance, implementation of the project for the reintegration of former combatants and support to communities, post-conflict recovery, humanitarian assistance (in particular to internally displaced persons facing serious food shortages), agricultural development, education and health, assistance to victims of sexual violence and international protection of the 22,000 foreign refugees living in the Central African Republic.

19. Financing amounting to US$ 5.5 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has enabled the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to enhance its emergency assistance in several areas and has helped the country team to finance activities and projects under the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) 2006. Nonetheless, the international response to the precarious humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic remains inadequate, having met only 42 per cent of the expressed needs. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has therefore kept up its advocacy efforts and has launched a semi-annual review of the CAP 2006, headed by the Prime Minister.

V. Human rights situation

20. The human rights situation, which is closely linked to the political and security context, has been marked by a strong resurgence of acts of violence by roadblockers, unidentified armed gangs and regular soldiers, particularly in the northern parts of the country. The soldiers at times act as "prison guards" and violate the physical integrity of the accused, largely with impunity. Many cases of violations of the right to life have also been recorded during the period under review. Security roadblocks sharply curtail the freedom of movement and have become veritable traps for road users. The national authorities have made considerable efforts, however, to limit the number of these roadblocks. As for investigations, the procedure is often tainted by irregularities, in particular by violations of time limits on police custody.

21. As for the judiciary, the criminal court held its annual session during the period under review and considered many cases, including those of persons accused of offences against the internal security of the State. The trials were held publicly, in a fair and transparent manner. The court showed its professionalism and ruled to acquit all the accused.

22. As part of its activities, the Human Rights Section of the Office continued its support for non-governmental organizations and national institutions. It organized training seminars and workshops in order to strengthen their capabilities.

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VI. Economic, financial and social situation

23. The economy registered a growth rate of 2.7 per cent (compared to 2.4 per cent in 2005). This improvement is linked to the partial reimbursement by the State of debts owing to cotton growers, the distribution of inputs and the purchase of current production. The persistence of exogenous factors, however, weighs heavily on the economy: thus, soaring petrol prices and the downturn in the prices of the main farm export products, coffee and cotton, led to a 2.5 per cent drop in the terms of trade. The unrest in the northern part of the country, which is plagued by roadblockers and other armed gangs, has also contributed to an economic slowdown.

24. Government finances are still marked by a shortage of resources, preventing the State from covering its expenditures. The result has been a recurrent deficit and an unsustainable debt burden. Nonetheless, the Government is continuing its efforts to maintain control of the wage bill by monitoring the list of pensioners and verifying qualifications, and it is also reforming the customs sector. A joint International Monetary Fund/World Bank/African Development Bank mission to Bangui from 12 to 19 August 2006 for the purpose of assessing the execution of the second post-conflict programme, adopted in January 2006, recommended that the Government should continue its efforts to improve the management of the national treasury. Revenues rose slightly at the end of June 2006, but the Government overspent by 0.3 billion CFA francs on payroll costs, and by 8.4 billion CFA francs on non-wage costs. On the whole, the State's overall performance showed some improvement over the preceding quarters, but non-wage costs were not sufficiently reduced to achieve the cumulative primary-balance target.

25. The International Monetary Fund invited the Central African authorities to make every effort to meet all quantitative targets as soon as possible, in order to allow for the opening of discussions on the preparation of a programme under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility, an essential condition for reaching the decision point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. In this context, the World Bank and the African Development Bank have pursued their dialogue with the Government on the clearing of the Central African Republic's arrears to the multilateral financial institutions. This discharge of debt is a necessary precondition for the effective re-engagement of these donors.

26. The social situation has been marked by strikes in the education, transport and customs sectors, and by the demand on the part of secondary and university students for scholarships. In particular, as a result of recent steps taken by the Head of State to reform the administration of customs and excise taxes, customs workers called a strike on 5 September 2006 to demand that these measures, providing for the redeployment of workers to other offices, be annulled. They also decided to file suit against the Government.

VII. Observations/recommendations

27. Despite the efforts made so far, the general situation in the Central African Republic is still volatile, as a result of both endogenous and exogenous factors. The constitutional order re-established in 2005 has been threatened for some time by the deterioration of the political, socio-economic and financial, humanitarian and security situation in the country. Central Africans must give priority to consensus-

building and dialogue to smooth out their differences, especially against the current backdrop of financial precariousness, which persists despite efforts to stabilize the budget. I am encouraged by the current discussions between the international financial institutions and the State aimed at reaching a cooperation agreement between the two parties.

28. Nonetheless, the persistent lack of security, in particular on the borders with Chad and the Sudan, represents a direct threat to stability in the Central African Republic and its neighbours. The defence and security forces, newly reorganized with the support of France, are still unable to repel the armed groups in the northern and north-eastern parts of the country. Therefore, the Government of the Central African Republic, with the support of the other countries of the subregion, is requesting the international community to provide additional resources to help the armed forces, backed by FOMUC, to enhance their operational capabilities so that they can restore security throughout the territory.

29. The Central African Government has requested the renewal of the mandate of BONUCA for another year. Through the good offices of my Special Representative in the Central African Republic, I am pursuing discussions with a view to determining the priority areas in respect of which our commitment remains essential to the consolidation of peace in this country.

30. I should like to pay a warm tribute to my Special Representative, General Lamine Cissé, and to the United Nations staff members in the Central African Republic for their devotion and courage in the performance of their duties during this especially difficult and stressful period.

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Security Council

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Letter dated 18 October 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In my capacity as the representative of the current Chairman of the African Union, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a communiqué adopted by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union at its 64th meeting, held in Addis Ababa on 17 October 2006 at the level of Heads of State and Government, on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Pascal **Gayama**
Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Congo to the United Nations
Representative of the current Chairman of the African Union

06-58008 (E) 261006

Annex to the letter dated 18 October 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English and French]

COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE 64TH MEETING OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union, at its 64th meeting held on 17 October 2006, at the level of Heads of State and Government, adopted the following decision on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire:

The Council,

1. **Recalls** decision PSC/AHG/Comm(XL) adopted at its 40th meeting held on 6 October 2005, which stipulates that the arrangements agreed upon in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement of 23 January 2003 shall continue from 31 October 2005 for a period not exceeding twelve (12) months, as well as resolution 1633 (2005) adopted by the United Nations Security Council on 21 October 2005;

2. **Takes note** with satisfaction of the efforts made by all the Ivorian leaders with a view to restoring confidence between the parties concerned and **urges** them to pursue their efforts;

3. **Reiterates** its concern over the persistence of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and the dangers it poses to the unity of that country and the cohesion of its social fabric, as well as to peace and stability in the West African region;

4. **Reaffirms** the commitment of the African Union to the respect of the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of Côte d'Ivoire, in conformity with the relevant principles enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, as well as the imperative need for the speedy reunification of Côte d'Ivoire. The Council **also reaffirms** the commitment of the African Union to the peaceful settlement of disputes and its total rejection of the use of force, as well as of any unconstitutional change of Government;

5. **Pays tribute** to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the leaders of the region for their relentless efforts aimed at promoting peace and reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire;

6. **Pays tribute also** to the United Nations for its invaluable contribution to the search for peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire, in particular through the role being played by the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), and **welcomes** the personal and continued involvement of its Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and his commitment to the restoration of peace in Côte d'Ivoire;

7. **Further pays tribute** to President Thabo Mbeki of the Republic of South Africa for the untiring efforts he has deployed in the service of peace and reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the numerous initiatives he has taken to move forward the peace process, in his capacity as African Union Mediator, driven by his deep commitment to finding African solutions to African problems;

8. **Commends** President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo, Chairperson of the African Union, for his tireless efforts and for the initiatives he has taken to support the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire and to assist in overcoming the obstacles encountered in its implementation;

9. **Expresses its appreciation** for the work done by the International Working Group (IWG) since its establishment, in conformity with decision PSC/AHG/Comm(XL) and resolution 1633 (2005);

10. **Takes note** of the Communiqué issued following the 10th meeting of the IWG, held in Abidjan, on 8 September 2006, in which the latter expressed its serious concern about the deep and persistent obstacles to the implementation of the decisions adopted by the meeting of the main Ivorian political leaders held in Yamoussoukro, on 5 July 2006, and of the roadmap elaborated by the IWG and adopted by the Ivorian Government during the Seminar held in Yamoussoukro, from 9 to 11 February 2006, noted the causes of these impediments, and stressed that, given the prevailing situation, it was impossible to meet the deadlines set by resolution 1633 (2005) and that, consequently, it was imperative to define a new transitional framework that can provide a remedy to the causes of the deadlock that have been identified;

11. **Endorses** the observation of the ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Abuja, on 6 October 2006, on the expiration of the transition period of twelve (12) months set by decision PSC/AHG/Comm (XL) and resolution 1633 (2005), and on the impossibility of organizing presidential elections on the scheduled date;

12. **Takes note** of the recommendations made by the ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on the management of the post-31 October 2006 period;

13. **Decides,** accordingly, that a new transition period not exceeding twelve (12) months shall be established commencing from 1st November 2006, to complete the following tasks:

- identification and registration of voters,
- DDR and restructuring of the defense and security forces,
- dismantling of the militias,
- restoration of State authority throughout the territory of Côte d'Ivoire, and
- the technical preparations for elections.

14. **Decides further** that, during this transition period, the following modalities shall apply:

i) President Gbagbo shall remain Head of State, until the end of the transition period,

ii) the Prime Minister of the transition Charles Konan Banny shall have all the necessary powers and means to implement the following activities:

- the disarmament programme,
- the identification process,
- the dismantling of the militias,
- the restoration of State authority throughout the country,
- electoral issues, and
- the redeployment of the administration and public services throughout the territory of Côte d'Ivoire.

iii) the Prime Minister shall also have the necessary authority over all the integrated Ivorian defense and security forces to enable him to carry out the tasks assigned to him,

iv) as provided for in decision PSC/AHG/Comm(XL) and resolution 1633 (2005), the Ministers shall be accountable to the Prime Minister, who shall have full authority over his Cabinet,

v) in the accomplishment of the mission of the Government, the Council of Ministers may, in all matters, take decisions by ordinances or decrees. In particular, the Council of Ministers may adopt, by ordinance, appropriate practical measures within the spirit of the law to speed up the processes of issuing duplicates of birth certificates and certificates of nationality,

vi) as provided for by decision PSC/AHG/Comm(XL) and resolution 1633 (2005), the Prime Minister shall not, in accordance with the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, be eligible to stand for the elections to be organized on 31st October 2007, at the latest;

15. **Decides** to accept the request of President Thabo Mbeki for South Africa to hand over the role of Mediation, following its election to the United Nations Security Council. The Council **reaffirms** that the African Union will continue to call upon the leadership of President Mbeki in the resolution of the Ivorian crisis. The Council **congratulates** South Africa for its election to the United Nations Security Council and **expresses** confidence that South Africa will continue to support the resolution of the various African conflicts and strive towards world peace and security;

16. **Decides** to entrust the pursuit of the mediation to President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo, in his capacity as Chairperson of the AU, in liaison with the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union and ECOWAS and, as the need may arise, in liaison with any other African leader willing to make a contribution to the search for peace in Côte d'Ivoire. The Council **further decides** that the representative of the African Union Mediator shall lead the day-to-day mediation in Côte d'Ivoire, in conformity with decision PSC/AHG/Comm(XL);

17. **Reaffirms** the centrality of DDR to the peace process and **calls** for its immediate completion as well as for the completion of the disarmament and dismantling of the militias, which should run concurrently with the identification of citizens. The Council **invites** the Ivorian authorities to commence security sector reform that would establish a unified force structure and which would reinforce the republican and neutral character of the forces;

18. **Agrees** on the need to organize seminars on security sector reform by the African Union and ECOWAS, in collaboration with partners and with the participation of commanding and senior officers from West African countries emerging from conflict. These seminars will examine, among other issues, the principles of civilian control of armed forces and personal and individual responsibility for acts of impunity or violation of human rights;

19. **Reaffirms** its support to the impartial forces, namely, UNOCI and the forces of Operation Licorne that support it, and **calls** for the enhancement of their mandate, particularly in the provision of security for high-ranking government personalities and in the maintenance of law and order, for the holding of free, transparent, open and fair elections;

20. **Underscores** the need for the High Representative for Elections (HRE) to work closely with the Prime Minister and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to ensure effective and timely preparation for the elections. The Council **encourages** the Office of the HRE to play a greater role in the resolution of disputes linked to the electoral process, or issues arising out of the procedures and processes to be adopted to ensure free, transparent, open and fair elections at the end of the transition period;

21. **Urges** all Ivorian parties to exercise maximum restraint, work together to overcome the current stalemate and refrain from any unilateral action during the transition period;

22. **Stresses** the crucial importance of the active involvement of the civil society in the peace process. In this respect, the Council **urges** the Ivorian Government to take all necessary steps to facilitate and to encourage the participation of the civil society in the peace process, and **requests** the Commission of the African Union and the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat to support all efforts deployed to that end;

23. **Reminds** the Ivorian authorities of their responsibility for the safety and security of persons and property of all ECOWAS and third country citizens in Côte d'Ivoire;

24. **Urges** the Government to ensure the speedy adoption and implementation of the Code of Conduct for the media as agreed in Yamoussoukro on 5 July 2006;

25. **Reaffirms its support** to the individual measures provided for in paragraphs 9 and 11 of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1572 (2004) of 15 November 2004 and subsequent resolutions relating to the commitments made by the Ivorian parties, and **calls on** the United Nations Security Council to take appropriate measures, including sanctions, against individuals or groups whose conduct, either by commission or omission, impedes or disrupts the implementation of the peace process and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions on Côte d'Ivoire;

26. **Urges** the United Nations to take appropriate measures for the effective implementation of the arms embargo on Côte d'Ivoire, in conformity with resolution 1572 (2004), and to ensure that those who violate the embargo are severely punished;

27. **Decides** to submit this decision to the United Nations Security Council to enlist its support and, to this effect, **requests** the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union to take all the necessary steps;

28. **Decides** to remain seized of the matter.

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Letter dated 17 October 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to convey the attached report on the international security presence in Kosovo covering the period from 1 to 31 August 2006 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. **Annan**

06-58014 (E) 231006

Annex

Monthly report to the United Nations on the operations of the Kosovo Force

1. The present report covers the period from 1 to 31 August 2006.

2. As of 28 August 2006, the total number of troops in theatre was 15,977, which included 2,610 troops from non-NATO countries.

3. There was no change to the status of partner non-NATO nation contributions.

Security

4. The overall security situation in Kosovo remains calm but tense owing to the political uncertainty related to the ongoing status talks.

5. Joachim Ruecker began his duties as the sixth Chief of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission (UNMIK) on 1 September. On the same date, Lieutenant General Roland Kather became the new Commander of the Kosovo Force (KFOR). Turning to the status process, direct talks between Belgrade and Pristina on decentralization and community rights on 7 and 8 August were inconclusive and did not produce any major breakthrough. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Martti Ahtisaari, and experts from his team travelled to Kosovo and met with the Kosovo-Albanian negotiating team in Pristina on 23 August in an attempt to bring the parties stances on decentralization and cultural heritage issues closer together. No substantial progress was achieved. On 31 August 2006, a memorandum of understanding was signed between UNMIK and the Ministry of Transportation, transferring to the provisional institutions of self-government responsibilities for providing public and humanitarian transportation to minorities as of 1 September. This agreement fulfils one of 13 priority standards set forth by the Contact Group in June 2006. By the end of August, nearly all 13 priority items have been implemented.

6. During the month of August, inter-ethnic incidents increased, with nine significant incidents reported, including against a Bosnian girl, Kosovo Albanians, Kosovo Serbs and a Serb-Montenegrin.

7. During the same period, there were no incidents of violence or threats directed against KFOR.

8. A total of 439 incidents occurred during the reporting period, compared to 343 recorded in the previous month. Weapons seizures made up the vast majority of incidents.

9. The Kosovo Force continues operations to prevent ethnic violence and to protect patrimonial sites and some cultural areas proposed by the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the future status process for Kosovo. It continues to deter possible threats directed against international organizations and military bases. The deployment of the German Operational Reserve Force Battalion that started on 28 July was further extended until 31 October. The main focus of KFOR operations remains in the north of the province. As of 31 August, all multinational task forces have been validated. As of 1 August, Sweden assumed the role of framework nation in the multinational task force (C) for a period of 1 year.

Compliance by the Serbian Army and the Ministry of Internal Affairs Special Police

10. Nothing to report.

Kosovo Protection Corps

11. The second Disciplinary Board convened on 29 August 2006 at KFOR headquarters. Fifteen cases of non-compliance were presented. The Board recorded 12 dismissals, including eight Serbs and one Ashkali. The final decision concerning the requested sanctions awaits the determination of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Four appeals to the previous Board decisions are ongoing. Eight out of the nine dismissals concerning minorities have never been present for duty since enrolling.

12. The Kosovo Force continues to support UNMIK in training the Kosovo Protection Corps. The Kosovo Force Commander's intent is to review the entire Kosovo Protection Corps training programme. The Commander plans to focus on keeping the Kosovo Protection Corps fully engaged by improving and extending training to their higher echelons (key leaders and senior Corps members) on non-military tasks.

13. The Corps activities in August were low owing to the vacation period. Fourteen Corps members were dismissed by the Disciplinary and Recruitment Board; eight new ethnic minority members were appointed.

14. The recruitment of minorities remains a Corps priority. The current active personnel establishment is 3,052. The total number of ethnic minorities increased by 21 compared with the past month. The Training and Doctrine Command of the Kosovo Protection Corps conducted four courses, with 59 attendees. During the month of August there were 14 approved ceremonies that involved 400 Corps members and over 2,500 civilians. The Corps also conducted two high-level ceremonies in which they did not follow the stipulated regulations for the request to deploy the ceremonial guard. These may represent a major incidence of non-compliance. The headquarters of the Kosovo Inspectorate of the Kosovo Protection Corps is investigating.

Conclusion

15. The overall situation in Kosovo is stable but the political uncertainty related to the status talks may raise some tension in the near term. Economic development and daily-life difficulties remain of great concern to the population. In an effort to influence the status talks, extremist elements could exploit the tension for political gain. The threat level against UNMIK and other international community facilities remains medium and the threat level for KFOR is low.

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Letter dated 19 October 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Timor-Leste to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour, on instruction from my Government, to transmit a copy of the letter signed by José Ramos-Horta, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, on multinational military forces in Timor-Leste (see annex). I would highly appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sofia **Borges**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

06-58020 (E) 251006

Annex to the letter dated 19 October 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Timor-Leste to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Multinational military forces in Timor-Leste

On behalf of the people of Timor-Leste and the Government, I wish to take this opportunity to extend appreciation to you and the Members of the Security Council for having established the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and for having previously endorsed the multinational forces from Australia, Malaysia and New Zealand, along with Portugal's gendarmerie force, who came to our aid in May this year.

I note that in resolution 1704 (2006) of 25 August 2006, paragraph 2, the Secretary-General was requested to review the arrangements to be established between UNMIT and the international security forces, having consulted all stakeholders, including the Government of Timor-Leste, and present his views no later than 25 October 2006.

I refer to our letter of 18 August, where I stated the Timorese leadership's view on the subject matter, and I will now outline our current view of the Timorese leadership on this matter so as to properly inform you, having consulted and taken into account the best interests of the people of Timor-Leste and that of neighbours and the current issues facing the Security Council.

• Multinational-international security forces for Timor-Leste

In our letter of 11 June 2006, it was said that the multinational security forces known as Joint Task Force 631 (JTF 631) had quickly quelled the violence and stabilized the situation. They continue to do this in an exemplary manner and are providing a secure environment in which the Timorese leaders and UNMIT can undertake their respective governance and support and good offices roles.

This enables the Timorese leadership to focus on current priorities of nation-building focused on service provision, especially to the poor, assistance to internally displaced persons to resettle and return home through the "Simu Malu" programme in conjunction with our President's national dialogue initiative, and institution-building; and for the United Nations police, currently 700 strong, to carry out regular policing functions, while working in close collaboration with Timorese institutions and authorities to reconstitute the national police force of Timor-Leste.

The current arrangement of the United Nations police, through UNMIT, undertaking the State function of law and order, and the military forces Joint Task Force 631, with Australia's contribution, providing security, is working extremely well. The coordination has been excellent since day one of the deployment and this has now been consolidated with UNMIT.

Australia, with military forces that currently compromise approximately 1,000 troops, has advised us that it is willing to stay at least until the elections of 2007 and beyond that time, by negotiation, if needed.

The Australian Prime Minister John Howard MP, informed me on a visit to Australia on 12 October 2006, in addition to the above, that the number of troops now in Timor-Leste would remain close to that number until at least December, and beyond if needed, and that the minimum number of troops at any time would not be below battalion strength.

Other States have indicated that they will consider deploying troops to join the current arrangement, as part of a regional multinational security force.

I am very mindful, as are all Timorese, that at this time the Security Council is seized with many matters that are needing urgent attention and resources, and am further mindful not to be a resource drain, especially when we have neighbours able and willing to assist the Security Council.

I can therefore state that it is the wish of all institutions of State, including our President, for this current arrangement of the police forces being under blue berets and the military forces being under green helmets to continue, with the approval of the Security Council. This position best suits the situation in Timor-Leste.

(*Signed*) José **Ramos-Horta**
Prime Minister

United Nations S/2006/832

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 October 2006

Original: English

Fourth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is my fourth semi-annual report to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004).

2. In the six months since my last report, of 19 April 2006 (S/2006/248), Lebanon witnessed first political standstill, then severe deterioration and prolonged instability.

3. Lebanon's National Dialogue reconvened on 28 April and 16 May 2006 to discuss the two remaining issues on its agenda, the Lebanese presidency and the arms of Hizbollah, amidst an increasingly tense political climate both domestically and with regard to Lebanese-Syrian relations.

4. On 1 and 2 June 2006 protests and clashes erupted after a television programme appeared to parody the Secretary-General of Hizbollah, Hassan Nasrallah. Youths from the southern suburbs of Beirut blocked the road to the airport with burning tyres and engaged in clashes with youths from the north-eastern suburbs.

5. In this context, the National Dialogue met on 8 June 2006; in the session, Lebanese political leaders agreed on a written code of conduct stipulating that they would refrain from attacking each other, in order to decrease the rising political and sectarian tension. On 29 June, the National Dialogue convened for the last time to date and adjourned, having reached no further agreements.

6. On 12 July, hostilities erupted between Israel and Hizbollah after Hizbollah launched an unprovoked attack across the Blue Line, abducting two Israeli soldiers and killing several others. I have outlined the course of events and effects of the conflict elsewhere in my reports on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2006/670 and S/2006/730), which was adopted on 11 August 2006 and led to a cessation of hostilities that has remained in effect since 14 August.

7. A tense political climate has continued to prevail in Lebanon. In its midst, in a worrying return to last year's climate of frequent assassinations and terrorist acts, a senior Lebanese security official survived an assassination attempt while driving on a road in south Lebanon on 5 September. Four of his aides and bodyguards were killed in the attack and five were wounded.

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8. In the early morning hours of 15 October, six Lebanese civilians were hurt when three rockets were launched into a building in downtown Beirut, close to both United Nations headquarters and the Grand Serail which houses the Prime Minister's offices. This disconcerting incident followed two other attacks which had not caused any casualties, with similar rocket launchers and with hand grenades against police stations in Lebanon. In the aftermath of the latest attacks, the Government of Lebanon has expanded the presence of the Internal Security Forces in Beirut by 800 men.

II. Implementation of resolution 1559 (2004)

9. Since the Council adopted resolution 1559 (2004) on 2 September 2004, there has been considerable progress towards its full implementation. In April 2005, the full withdrawal of Syrian troops, military assets and military intelligence apparatus was achieved. Shortly afterwards, free and fair legislative elections were conducted in Lebanon (see S/2005/673). In my last report, I stated that with the agreements reached in the Lebanese National Dialogue, significant further progress towards the full implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) had been made.

10. Additional progress has been made in recent months with the significant and historic deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces in the south of the country for the first time in three decades. Moreover, Lebanese troops have taken up positions along the eastern part of the Blue Line for the first time ever, and have deployed in significant numbers along Lebanon's border with the Syrian Arab Republic. These steps represent important progress towards the full extension of the Government of Lebanon's control over all Lebanese territory and the fulfilment of the requirements of resolutions 425 (1978) and 1559 (2004) and the Taif Accords.

11. However, resolution 1559 (2004), and in particular its provisions calling for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias and the strict respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government, has yet to be implemented in full.

A. Withdrawal of foreign forces deployed in Lebanon

12. In my report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) of 12 September 2006 (S/2006/730), I stated that to the best of the ability of the United Nations to ascertain, the only foreign forces currently deployed in Lebanon were those serving under the banner of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Israeli troops, who had entered Lebanon in the course of the recent conflict, returned beyond the Blue Line on 1 October 2006, with the exception of their deployment in the divided village of Ghajar. I expect this presence to end shortly in the context of a trilateral discussion on security arrangements for the village.[1]

[1] I have previously reported on the otherwise complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Lebanese territory, in full compliance with this aspect of resolution 425 (1978), and on the full withdrawal of all Syrian troops, military assets and the military intelligence apparatus from Lebanon, in full compliance with this aspect of resolution 1559 (2004). The Security Council has endorsed my conclusions in both respects.

B. Sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon

1. Syrian intelligence apparatus and activity in Lebanon

13. The Government of Lebanon has stated to me that its efforts to consolidate its full control over all security services continue. Allegations have at times been made, including by the Government of Lebanon, that there continues to be Syrian intelligence activity in Lebanon.[2]

2. Establishment of mutual diplomatic representation

14. Subsequent to my last report on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), the Security Council adopted its resolution 1680 (2006) of 17 May 2006, which encouraged the delineation of borders between the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon and the establishment of full diplomatic relations and representation.

15. I have stated my expectation of the early initiation of a process between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, based on an agreed action agenda, which will eventually lead to the establishment of full diplomatic relations.[3] I reiterate my expectation in the light of the Council's position, as expressed in resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). Steps towards the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon would significantly contribute to the stability of the region.

3. Delineation of the border

16. In addition to its call contained in resolution 1680 (2006) on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to respond positively to the request made by the Government of Lebanon to delineate their common border, the Council again emphasized the importance of the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory in its resolution 1701 (2006).

17. In the context of the general need for a delineation of the Syrian-Lebanese border, the Government of Lebanon has informed me that Syrian border police maintained sand barriers and positions inside Lebanese territory in several locations during the last six months. The Government of Lebanon further informed me that there were mobile positions, some of which were also manned by Syrian border police on occasion. The apparent uncertainty over the border in the areas concerned highlights, once again, the need for a comprehensive border delineation agreement between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, in the best interest of both countries.

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[2] The Syrian Government stated in a letter to me dated 24 April 2006 that it would "like to reaffirm once again that all its troops, military assets and security apparatus withdrew from Lebanon on 26 April 2005" (S/2006/259, annex).

[3] In my report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) of 12 September 2006 (S/2006/730), I noted the assurances given to me by President Assad and reiterated my expectation of the early initiation of a process between the two countries, based on an agreed action agenda, which would eventually lead to the establishment of full diplomatic relations. I must recall in this context the statements made by the representative of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in the Security Council after Prime Minister Siniora's address on 21 April 2006 (S/PV.5417) and in the letter addressed to me from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic of 24 April 2006 (S/2006/259).

18. As regards delineation of the border in the Shab'a Farms area, Prime Minister Siniora enquired in a meeting between us on 21 April 2006 as to possible steps to be undertaken, from the perspective of the United Nations, for the sovereignty of the Shab'a Farms to be transferred from the Syrian Arab Republic to Lebanon. I responded to the Prime Minister in a letter dated 5 June 2006. Prime Minister Siniora and I have discussed the matter further, including when I visited Beirut during my recent mission to the region and in connection with the Government of Lebanon's seven-point plan.

19. In the light of Syrian statements indicating that the Shab'a Farms area is Lebanese and considering the alternative path suggested by the Government of Lebanon in its seven-point plan, I continue to investigate carefully the complicated cartographic, legal and political implications of such an approach and will revert to the Council in due course.[4] In the meantime, I wish to reiterate my urgent call on the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon to undertake the necessary steps to delineate their common border, in fulfilment of resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). Such steps would significantly contribute to the stability of the region.

4. Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity

20. Subsequent to my last report on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) (S/2006/248), persistent and provocative Israeli air incursions, occasionally reaching deep into Lebanese airspace and generating sonic booms over populated areas, continued to be a matter of serious concern (see S/2006/560). The Government of Israel has continued to maintain its claim that such overflights are carried out for security reasons.

21. Israeli overflights have also continued since the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hizbollah went into effect on 14 August 2006. I expect that such air incursions and violations of Lebanese sovereignty, which stand in contradiction to resolutions 425 (1978) and 1559 (2004) as well as resolution 1701 (2006) itself, will cease fully.

22. The recent hostilities between Israel and Hizbollah saw an extended period of time in which Israel violated Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity. With resolution 1701 (2006), a cessation of hostilities has been established, which both parties have by and large abided by, as I have reported in my report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2006/730).

23. The Government of Lebanon has also informed me of another alleged violation of Lebanese sovereignty by Israel.[5]

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[4] According to the seven-point plan, the Security Council might place the Shab'a Farms area and the adjacent Kafr Shuba hills temporarily under United Nations jurisdiction until border delineation and Lebanese sovereignty over them are fully settled in accordance with international law.

[5] The Lebanese Government asserted to me that the assassination of an official of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Lebanon on 26 May 2006 had been carried out by an intelligence network operating under the instruction of Israel. A press release from the Lebanese delegation, dated 21 June 2006, stated that the Department of Intelligence of the Lebanese Armed Forces had uncovered a terrorist network working for Israel. One of the alleged members of the network, the press release further asserted, had admitted to several assassinations carried out in Lebanon at the behest of Israeli security services, including that of 26 May 2006. The Israeli Government has denied these claims.

C. Extension of Lebanese Government control over all Lebanese territory

24. In my last report on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), I noted that a number of serious incidents had emphasized the necessity for the Government of Lebanon, through its regular security and armed forces, to extend its control over all its territory, in order to maintain quiet along the Blue Line. As I stated, the Government of Lebanon, as the sole legitimate authority vested with a monopoly on the use of force throughout its territory, had to do more to exercise its control accordingly.

25. During the hostilities, the Lebanese Government reaffirmed its determination to extend its control over all of Lebanon's territory and to establish its monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. Prime Minister Siniora's seven-point plan envisaged that the Lebanese Government would extend its authority over its territory through its own legitimate armed forces, such that there will be no weapons or authority other than that of the Lebanese State as stipulated in the Taif Accords. The Lebanese Council of Ministers adopted the seven-point plan as the official position of the Government of Lebanon on 27 July 2006. On 7 August 2006, the cabinet again reaffirmed its commitment and decided to send 15,000 Lebanese soldiers to the south simultaneously with the withdrawal of the occupying Israeli forces beyond the Blue Line. The Council of Ministers also confirmed its readiness to accept UNIFIL support, if needed, in order to facilitate the deployment of the Lebanese army troops in the context of the implementation of the seven-point plan.

26. I wish to welcome again the significant and historic step taken by the Government of Lebanon to deploy the Lebanese Armed Forces to the south of the country. In addition to the first deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces in the south in three decades, Lebanese troops have taken up positions along the eastern part of the Blue Line for the first time ever. As I have previously reported, a significant number of Lebanese troops have also been deployed along the Lebanese border with the Syrian Arab Republic.[6]

27. Since the cessation of hostilities came into effect in Lebanon on 14 August 2006, renewed reports of intercepted arms shipments have been brought to my attention; such shipments would stand in contradiction to the arms embargo imposed by resolution 1701 (2006). I will endeavour to comply with my reporting requirements on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), as expressed in paragraph 17 of that resolution, with regard to possible reports of arms shipments. I also call on all Member States, particularly Lebanon's neighbours, to ensure full compliance with the arms embargo imposed by paragraph 15 of resolution 1701 (2006).

[6] As outlined in my last report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2006/730), I continue to believe that the imposition of an arms embargo, which is fully consistent with the Lebanese cabinet decision of 27 July 2006 that there should be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than those of the Lebanese State, is a necessary measure given the history of arms traffic bound for Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias. I also emphasized the need for the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular, to help enforce the provisions of paragraphs 14 and 15 of resolution 1701 (2006), given that it shares the sole land border with Lebanon that is generally open to traffic.

D. Disbanding and disarmament of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias

28. I continue to believe that disarmament must take place through a political process that will lead to the full restoration of the authority of the Government of Lebanon. If the ultimate purpose of disarmament is the establishment of a strong Lebanese State for all inhabitants of Lebanon, as the Taif Accords stipulated, then the disarming and disbanding of all remaining militias must be realized in such a way that it strengthens, rather than weakens, the central authorities. It is a definitional requirement of the state to enjoy a monopoly on the legitimate use of force throughout its territory. In that context, it is important that all neighbouring States abide by the arms embargo, as called for in resolution 1701 (2006).

1. Palestinian militias

29. The National Dialogue's decision to disarm Palestinian militias outside the camps has not been implemented within the six-month deadline, which ended on 26 August 2006. The National Dialogue, in its session on 16 May 2006, had decided to establish a committee tasked with following up on the implementation of its agreement.

30. I expect that the Government of Lebanon, pursuant to its decision of 27 July 2006, according to which there should be no weapons or authority other than that of the Lebanese State as stipulated in the Taif Accords, will further define a political process and a clear timeline for the full disarmament of Palestinian militias in Lebanon. I call for the issue to be settled as early as possible. I also call on all donors to support the efforts of the Government of Lebanon and of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

31. There have been a number of incidents underlining the importance of the eventual full disarmament of Palestinian militias in Lebanon over the past six months. On 17 May 2006, the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Palestinian militia Fatah-Intifada, which is headquartered in Damascus and maintains a number of bases on Lebanese territory, engaged in clashes after an army patrol approached a newly established Fatah-Intifada position in eastern Lebanon and came under fire. A Lebanese Armed Forces soldier and a Palestinian militant later died from wounds sustained in the subsequent exchanges of fire; another Lebanese soldier was detained for several hours before he was released. The Lebanese Armed Forces eventually took over the base; the Palestinian militants implicated in the incident were later arrested.

32. On 26 May 2006, a leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad was assassinated together with his brother in southern Lebanon by a car bomb. A major escalation occurred two days later along the Blue Line, when at least eight rockets were launched across the Blue Line into Israel (see S/2006/560). The Palestinian Islamic Jihad initially claimed responsibility, but later retracted its assertion. Israel retaliated with air strikes against Lebanese bases of the Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC); a subsequent major exchange across the Blue Line also involved Hizbollah and escalated into the firing of rockets and missiles across the Blue Line by Hizbollah and the Israel Defense Forces. Later the same day, the Lebanese Armed Forces sent equipment to clear rubble at a PFLP-GC base but were denied entry to the base. Also the same day, PFLP-GC leader Ahmad Jibril said in an interview with a Lebanese newspaper

that his group coordinated all of their military action with Hizbollah, also stating his opposition to the disarmament of Palestinian militias in Lebanon.

33. Despite these incidents, I took positive note of the reopening of the representative office of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Lebanon on 15 May 2006. I have continued my dialogue on the issue of the Palestinian militias in Lebanon with the Chairman of PLO, Mahmoud Abbas, who has assured me of his full support for the restoration of the Lebanese Government's monopoly on the use of force throughout its territory.

2. Hizbollah

34. With regard to the armed component of Hizbollah, I wish to recall once again Prime Minister Siniora's address to the Council of 21 April 2006 (S/PV.5417) and the consensual decision of the Lebanese in the Taif Accords.[7] The National Dialogue extensively discussed the issue of Hizbollah's arms earlier this year, but did not reach agreement. Hizbollah continued to limit the authority of the Government of Lebanon, especially in areas close to the Blue Line.

35. The eventual disarmament of Hizbollah in the sense of the completion of its transformation into a solely political party, consistent with the requirements of the Taif Accords, is a key element in ensuring a permanent end to the hostilities and a critical provision to be realized in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and in the full restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. A number of specific measures to further this purpose are enumerated in resolution 1701 (2006) and are in the process of being implemented, in particular the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani River of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL, which would constitute an important step towards the disarming of all militias in Lebanon.

36. I expect that the Government of Lebanon, pursuant to its decision of 27 July 2006, according to which there should be no weapons or authority other than that of the Lebanese State as stipulated in the Taif Accords," will further define a political process and a clear timeline for the full disarmament of Hizbollah in the sense of the completion of its transformation into a solely political party. I call for the disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias to be settled as early as possible.

37. I note that Hizbollah, through its representatives in the Lebanese Council of Ministers, agreed to the cabinet decision of 27 July 2006.[8] At the same time, I have

[7] Prime Minister Siniora repeated in his address that "the future role of Hizbollah's weapons in defending Lebanon is a matter of national debate. That debate will be carried out in the context of a strategy agreed upon by all Lebanese concerning how best to defend Lebanon, against the backdrop of the provisions of the Taif Accords of 1989, United Nations resolutions regarding Lebanon and the continued occupation of the Shab'a Farms, as well as the long history of incursions and violations of Lebanese territory by Israel. Reconciling those considerations with the natural obligation of the State to be the sole provider of security to all its citizens and residents, and the right of the State to have a monopoly over arms and to exercise its full authority throughout the country, is a major challenge to be addressed in the period ahead."

[8] I have also taken note of the statements by Hizbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah in his address to a major rally in southern Beirut on 22 September 2006 that "we are not saying that our weapons will remain forever. It is not logical for these weapons to remain forever. There is bound to be an end to them"

taken note of further statements by Hizbollah representatives that stand in contradiction to Security Council resolution 1559 (2004).

38. In this context, I note again that a dialogue with parties other than the Lebanese authorities is indispensable in order to realize the implementation of the mandate contained in resolution 1559 (2004) to disarm and disband all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias. I expect to continue my dialogue with such parties, in particular with the Governments of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran, which maintain close relations with Hizbollah.

39. Against this background, I wish to reiterate my call on all parties with the ability to influence Hizbollah to support its transformation into a solely political party, consistent with the requirements of the Taif Accords, as a means to achieve the full disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias. I also reiterate my call to all Member States, particularly Lebanon's neighbours, to ensure compliance with the arms embargo imposed by paragraph 15 of resolution 1701 (2006), which is a measure facilitating the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), which require the disarmament of militias in Lebanon.

E. Presidential election process

40. The issue of the Lebanese presidency was discussed in several rounds of the National Dialogue until the participants in the National Dialogue "agreed to disagree" on the subject in their seventh round of consultations. In this context, I also recall Prime Minister Siniora's address to the Security Council on 21 April 2006.[9]

III. Observations

41. Over the past two years, there has been considerable progress towards the full implementation of resolution 1559 (2004). The Syrian Arab Republic has withdrawn its troops, military assets and military intelligence apparatus. Free and fair legislative elections have been conducted. The Lebanese National Dialogue manifested further progress. In the past few months, there has been additional progress with the extension of the Government's control over Lebanese territory, in particular in the south and along the border with the Syrian Arab Republic. However, resolution 1559 (2004), and in particular its provisions calling for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias and the strict respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government, has yet to be implemented in full.

42. In the past six months, Lebanon has suffered a severe setback. Instead of making further strides towards completing its political transformation and reaping the economic rewards of political progress, Lebanon confronts challenges of a magnitude unseen since the end of the civil war. Moreover, since the end of the

[9] Prime Minister Siniora stated that "the majority in parliament considers the extension of President Lahoud's term in September 2004 for three more years to have been the result of interference and coercion by Syria — which had great influence over the Lebanese parliament at that time — against all of the advice discouraging such heavy-handed interference" (S/PV.5417).

hostilities, a tense political climate has prevailed, with manifold challenges confronting the Lebanese in their quest to reconstruct their country, their polity and their economy.

43. The United Nations remains committed to supporting Lebanon, its Government and its people as they face the enormous task of recovering the momentum on the path to consolidating the Lebanese State as an authority of the people, by the people, for the people.

44. I would like to express my thanks to all countries that have already provided assistance to the Lebanese, be it in the form of troop contributions to UNIFIL, bilateral technical aid, or through financial support. Such assistance will continue to be needed as the Lebanese once again embrace their fate of economic and political reconstruction. I also emphasize that all such assistance should be lent in ways that contribute to the consolidation of the Government's monopoly on the use of force throughout its territory.

45. In the months ahead, much remains to be done. With the adoption of resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006) and with repeated Lebanese cabinet decisions to extend the Government's authority over all Lebanese territory, a new framework has been established for the full implementation of all provisions of resolution 1559 (2004). A catalogue of measures has been laid down that constitute a road map for the full implementation of resolution 1559 (2004). The Government of Lebanon, with significant international support, is undertaking important steps that will help it to fully implement resolution 1559 (2004). Achieving this goal, however, continues to depend on both the Lebanese and on the cooperation of parties other than the Lebanese.

46. In the months ahead, Lebanon will have to engage again in a truly national and inclusive dialogue. The disarming and disbanding of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, which lies at the heart of the political transformation Lebanon has been undergoing and is a necessary element to complete, at long last, Lebanon's consolidation as a sovereign and democratic State, can only be achieved through an inclusive process that addresses the political and economic interests of all Lebanese and of those living in Lebanon.

47. It is my deep hope that the opportunities born from conflict will be seized upon and that Lebanon may once again rise from the ashes of destruction and war. I emphasize once again in this context that Hizbollah's transformation into a solely political party, consistent with the requirements of the Taif Accords, is a key element in ensuring a permanent end to hostilities and in the full restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

48. For the purpose of achieving this goal, on the path towards the greater objective of consolidating the Lebanese State, it is indispensable that all parties who have influence in Lebanon support a constructive political process. I note in this context that the cooperation of outside parties is explicitly called for in resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006), and I join these calls.

49. The establishment of full diplomatic relations between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic and their delineation of the shared border, including, in particular, in the Shab'a Farms area, through a bilateral agreement would constitute significant steps towards promoting peace and security in the region. Mindful of the importance of border delineation to the Lebanese, I am expeditiously working to establish in

full the cartographic, legal and political implications of the approach suggested in Lebanon's seven-point plan and will revert to the Council. I also wish to call for the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon to address in their bilateral contacts the issue of Lebanese detainees in Syrian custody.

50. I reiterate my call on all parties and actors to support Lebanon's reconstruction and political transformation and to urgently take all enabling measures to this end, as outlined in the Taif Accords and in resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006).

51. I will continue my efforts for the purpose of the full implementation of these and all other relevant Security Council resolutions pertaining to the restoration of the territorial integrity, full sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon and the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace throughout the entire Middle Eastern region, consistent with all relevant Security Council resolutions.

United Nations S/2006/833

Security Council

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20 October 2006

Original: English

Note by the President of the Security Council

Following consultations among the members of the Security Council, the members agreed to elect the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the following committee for the period ending 31 December 2006:

Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea:

Chairman:

Peter Burian (Slovakia)

Vice-Chairmen:

Argentina and Qatar

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United Nations S/2006/834

Security Council

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20 October 2006

Original: English

Letter dated 9 October 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the declaration on the elections in Zambia, issued on 6 October 2006 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kirsti **Lintonen**
Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations

06-58195 (E) 251006

Annex to the letter dated 9 October 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on elections in Zambia

The European Union welcomes the holding of the democratic tripartite elections in Zambia on 28 September 2006, and the strong commitment of the people of Zambia to democratic development demonstrated by the high turnout of voters. The European Union congratulates the President, Levy Mwanawasa, on his victory and his second mandate as the President of the Republic of Zambia, and congratulates the Members of Parliament and local Councillors elected. The European Union calls upon all candidates and political parties to respect the outcome of the democratic process.

The European Union is pleased to note that the elections have been considered by international observers, in particular by the European Union Election Observation Mission in its preliminary assessment, as generally peaceful and well managed. Voting took place in a largely calm and orderly environment, and the processing of results was transparent. The independence and professionalism of the Electoral Commission of Zambia have created confidence in the process. The European Union notes the important and positive role that the civil society organizations have played before and during the elections. The European Union considers that the elections represent another positive example, for the region and the continent, of participatory democracy in action, an area to which both the African Union and the European Union attach the highest importance.

While there has been marked improvement in the conduct of elections, challenges remain. There is still some need for improvement and reform of the legal framework as well as a need to ensure a level playing field. The number of women standing as candidates has also remained extremely low.

The European Union reiterates its determination to continue to support the Republic of Zambia in its efforts to strengthen democratic processes, foster good governance, fight against corruption and alleviate poverty.

The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Turkey, Croatia[1] and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,[1] the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Montenegro, and Serbia, and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and Moldova, align themselves with this declaration.

[1] Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilization and Association Process.

United Nations S/2006/835

Security Council

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25 October 2006

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Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire

Summary

The present report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005). It is presented to the Council and its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict as the first country report from Côte d'Ivoire from the monitoring and reporting mechanism referred to in paragraph 3 of that resolution. The report, which covers the period from January 2005 to September 2006, specifies the grave violations perpetrated against children in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly the killing and maiming of children, rape or other instances of grave sexual violence, especially against girls, and the abduction of and trafficking in children. The report highlights in particular ongoing conflict among ethnic groups and communities, which is having a severe impact on the lives and well-being of children and preventing the voluntary return of internally displaced persons to their homes. The report also highlights the progress made in dialogue with parties to the conflict and outlines the consequent action plans of the Forces nouvelles and four pro-Government militia groups in western Côte d'Ivoire to end the use of child soldiers and release all children associated with their forces. The report stresses the responsibility of the Government and the Front populaire ivoirien to support the United Nations in the identification and establishment of similar dialogue with all other militia groups. It also highlights the follow-up and programmatic response to violations.

The report recommends targeted action and measures against parties and individuals that systematically commit grave violations against children and rigorous and timely investigation and prosecution by relevant authorities of incidents of grave violations against children to address the prevailing culture of impunity. It also calls upon the international community and donors to provide timely and adequate assistance for rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for all children associated with fighting forces in the country to ensure the long-term sustainable success of such efforts.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report, covering the period from January 2005 to September 2006, is prepared in accordance with Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) focusing on six grave violations against children in situations of conflict: (a) the recruitment and use of child soldiers; (b) rape and other sexual violence against children; (c) the killing and maiming of children; (d) the abduction of children; (e) attacks against schools or hospitals; and (f) denial of humanitarian access for children. The report identifies the principal parties to conflict and illustrates progress made in the dialogue towards the establishment of action plans to end violations. It also illustrates programmatic responses to violations in support of affected children in Côte d'Ivoire.

II. Political, military and social developments in Côte d'Ivoire

2. The conflict in Côte d'Ivoire began in 2002 with a military coup that led the country to be divided into two territories separated by a buffer zone, or "zone of confidence". The weeks of fighting and sporadic violence that followed cost many lives and left thousands of children orphaned. The south of the country remains under the control of the Government, while the north has been seized by the opposition, known as the Forces nouvelles. The zone of confidence falls under the authority of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the French forces, Licorne. The Security Council, in its resolution 1633 (2005), established an International Working Group mandated to promote regular dialogue and broker a lasting peace among the various Ivorian political elements factions. In the same resolution, it also called for the nomination of a prime minister to be entrusted with the responsibility of leading the identification and disarmament process and organizing general presidential elections by the end of October 2006. However, the elections are delayed owing to meagre progress made in the preparations as a result of continuous disagreements between the various parties to the conflict. To date, the two major challenges to the peace process remain the identification and registration of a large proportion of the population and the disarmament of armed groups. The national demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programme expects to benefit an estimated 2,000 armed militia men and women in the west (Guiglo), 4,000 soldiers from the Government regular army (Forces armées nationales de Côte d'Ivoire — FANCI) recruited after 19 September 2002 and 38,000 elements of the armed forces of the Forces nouvelles (FAFN). In addition, it has been estimated that 3,000 children are associated with FAFN and 1,000, with militia groups. The prevalence of weapons continues to translate into a high degree of insecurity throughout the country.

3. Children represent a large proportion of the population of Côte d'Ivoire. In its initial report submitted in 2000 to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire indicated that children under 15 years of age represented almost half the total population, or 48.2 per cent, in 1993; individuals under 20 accounted for 56 per cent. This high proportion of young people places a heavy burden on the education and health care systems. Since the start of the conflict in 2002, thousands of families have fled their homes because of conflict, including intermittent ethnic violence fuelled by xenophobia, land disputes and political affiliation. In territories under the control of the Government, a study

conducted by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in 2005 estimated that there were 709,377 internally displaced persons in five regions of the country: Abidjan, Daloa, Duékoué, Toulépleu and Yamoussoukro. It is estimated that 51,037 of them are children who were born after their parents were displaced. The internally displaced persons often express reluctance to return to their villages for fear of attacks.

4. Children continue to bear the brunt of the conflict, which effectively denies them access to basic rights and needs such as education, health care and adequate nutrition, and increases their vulnerability to being exposed to violence and other abuse. The situation is worse in areas under the control of the Forces nouvelles, where in the wake of the conflict teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers and other civil servants fled to the south of the country. The collapse of the health and educational infrastructure in the north has devastating consequences for children. Many children in those areas have not taken exams since the beginning of the war, which has seriously undermined their ability to progress in their education and lives. It is only in 2006 that the administration of exams has once again been possible in the north, as a result of concerted advocacy by the United Nations. An acute shortage of adequate staffing and equipment persists in the health sector. The conflict has contributed to high levels of poverty, trauma and family breakdown, which have had a significant impact on children, including an increase in the number of children living on the street and engaged in prostitution in Abidjan, Bouaké and other cities. Furthermore, child labour and the number of orphaned and other especially vulnerable children have increased as a direct consequence of the conflict.

5. Access to the affected children by United Nations agencies is generally unimpeded, except in areas where unpredictable hostilities and violence may periodically break out. For example, in the western town of Guiglo, service delivery for children was hampered for several months owing to the violent incidents of January 2006, when United Nations personnel were evacuated following an attack on United Nations peacekeepers by a large crowd that included children. Reportedly, five Ivorian nationals were killed in the incident, including two children aged 14 and 16 years. An investigation by the United Nations is in progress to establish the cause of death.

6. The United Nations continues to express deep concern over the use of children as human barricades to impede the access of United Nations peacekeepers during episodes of violence, particularly in territories under the control of the Government. On 26 July 2005, in the aftermath of the attacks of Agboville and Anyama, a large organized crowd, including several children and women with babies on their backs, blocked a UNOCI military convoy at Petit Yapo, preventing access to these areas. Children involved in such situations often run the risk of being injured or killed.

III. Incidents and trends of grave violations

7. In Côte d'Ivoire children are exposed to a number of grave violations, including killing or maiming, recruitment and use as child soldiers, rape and other grave sexual violence, particularly against girls, abduction and attacks against schools or hospitals. Of particular concern has been the upsurge of rape and other sexual violence against children and women, with perpetrators often getting away

with such crimes unpunished. There are no reliable data reflecting the full scale of violations, and relatively few cases are investigated by the authorities, largely because of the prevailing sense of impunity of perpetrators.

8. Of grave concern is the level of violations and impunity in areas controlled by the Forces nouvelles, where there has been no administration of justice since the beginning of the conflict. The United Nations has been alarmed particularly at the large number of children subjected to detention, often illegal, and to the grave risks of abuse of children under such circumstances.

A. Recruitment and use of child soldiers

9. Children are associated with armed forces and groups both in the Government-held territories and in areas under the control of FAFN. In my report on children and armed conflict of 9 February 2005 (A/59/695-S/2005/72), I cited the release of 273 children by FAFN, which was listed in the report for the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

10. There is currently no tangible evidence of children participating in the Government's regular armed forces (FANCI). It is evident, however, that children are associated with armed militia groups close to the ruling party, the Front populair ivoirien (FPI). These militias are active in areas under the control of the Government, notably in the west, where the following four groups have been identified: Front pour la libération du grand ouest (FLGO), Alliance patriotique du peuple Wé (APWE), Union patriotique de résistance du Grand Ouest (UPRGO) and Mouvement ivoirien de libération de l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire (MILOCI). Both FAFN and pro-Government militia groups in the west deny the recruitment of child soldiers. However, they admit to the association of children with their fighting forces.

11. Since the adoption by the Security Council in July 2005 of resolution 1612 (2005) and the concerted advocacy of the United Nations for dialogue and action plans to end the recruitment and use of children in the framework of the resolution, FAFN and militia groups have signalled their willingness to cooperate in this regard. Since July 2005, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and its implementing partners have reported the demobilization of 327 children associated with fighting forces in areas under the control of the Forces nouvelles, of which 251 were officially handed over to the United Nations by FAFN. In addition, 600 self-demobilized children in Danané, who received military training from pro-FAFN Liberian fighters during the conflict, and 400 children formerly associated with militia groups in the west have been identified for rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. Although no exact figures of the total number of children associated with FAFN are available, a caseload of approximately 4,000 children was estimated. United Nations monitoring and verification over the past year indicates that active recruitment of children by FAFN is not occurring and that measures are being put in place to identify children associated with their forces for handover to the United Nations. At this time there is no specific information regarding ongoing active recruitment of children by pro-Government militias, owing in part to access restrictions.

B. Killing and maiming of children

12. Many children were killed in the weeks of fighting between FANCI and FAFN in November 2002. However, most of the children who have been killed or maimed in the conflict have died either during clashes among the various ethnic groups or in politically or criminally motivated acts and episodes of violence. It should be stressed that the ongoing conflict in Côte d'Ivoire does not absolve State and non-State actors of their legal obligation under humanitarian law to protect children from killing, maiming and other grave violations.

13. Of particular concern is the killing and maiming of children in the context of inter-community violence fuelled by disputes over land ownership or political affiliation, particularly among the Guéré, Dioula and Baoulé ethnicities in Fengolo, Diahouin, Toazeo, Guitrozon, Duékoué and other villages in the west. These are located in territories under the control of the Government and in the zone of confidence. Several episodes of violence among these communities have taken place since the start of the conflict, during which houses and other property were destroyed and many individuals, including children, were killed. The UNOCI Human Rights Division reported allegations of infiltration into the zone of confidence by militia groups in the west (APWE, UPRGO and FLGO) in support of the Guérés while elements of FAFN support the Dioulas. The following cases reflect trends of killing and maiming of children:

(a) On 21 April 2005 several unidentified assailants executed a family from the Yacouba ethnic group in Petit Logouale zone of confidence. Two children, a boy and a girl, and their father were killed with a machete, and their mother was shot dead;

(b) On 1 June 2005 unidentified assailants attacked the villages of Guitrozon and Petit Duékoué, inhabited mainly by the Guéré ethnic group. It is reported that 41 individuals, including 3 babies, were killed in one house; the stomach of a pregnant woman was slit open with a machete in Guitrozon; and several houses were set on fire with their occupants, including children, still inside. In the aftermath of those attacks, on 6 June 2005 seven individuals from the Dioula ethnic group, including four children, were reportedly executed in the borough of Latif and Cokoma by unidentified assailants;

(c) On 16 April 2006 the Ghanaian battalion escorted the United Nations police to the village of Bania in the zone of confidence, where community members identified an individual accused of killing two children in activities related to sorcery;

(d) On 28 June 2006 six persons, including a 1-year-old child, were killed by unknown assailants in the village of Boho, 29 kilometres from Bangolo. This attack followed the discovery of the corpses of two children of Burkina Faso on 24 June 2006 in the village of Duekpé.

C. Abduction of children

14. The abduction of children in Côte d'Ivoire remains a serious concern, often believed to be related to the issue of child trafficking. Although this linkage and the scale of the problem has not been sufficiently documented, it is believed that the

climate of conflict and insecurity and the deterioration of social and administrative structures has rendered children more vulnerable to abduction and trafficking. Some reports suggest the involvement of networks of organized criminals involved in the trafficking of children into Côte d'Ivoire from neighbouring countries or abducting children from different parts of the country for forced labour in cacao plantations or mines or to be used as prostitutes or domestic servants.

15. The following cases reflect trends of abduction against children:

(a) On 15 June 2005 a 12-year-old girl was abducted in Korhogo (northern Côte d'Ivoire) and taken to Mali where she was forced into marriage. The father of the girl reportedly travelled to Mali to collect the girl but was threatened by her abductors and the husband, who told him he would be arrested by the Malian authorities if he did not leave the country;

(b) In April 2006 an 8-year-old schoolboy was abducted in the Government-controlled Marcory district of Abidjan. His eyes were removed in what is suspected to be a ritual practice. The case is still pending investigation;

(c) In July 2006 the national gendarmerie based in Government-held Agboville arrested a number of individuals believed to be part of a network involved in the trafficking and sale of children. Three alleged female perpetrators were apprehended in the operation with four abducted children between the ages of 2 and 5 years in their custody. Following an investigation, the gendarmerie arrested an adult male, the alleged mastermind and ringleader of the network. The case is pending trial.

D. Attacks against schools or hospitals

16. There is a lack of precise records of attacks against schools and hospitals, although it is known that several schools and medical centres were destroyed in the course of the hostilities between FANCI and FAFN and during the inter-community fighting that followed. The regional health centres of Danané, Man and Bouaké suffered major damage. With the exception of the French school, which was specifically targeted and ransacked by the Young Patriots in Abidjan in November 2004, schools and medical centres have generally been destroyed during the conflict as part of indiscriminate attacks rather than as a result of systematic targeting. It should also be noted that many of those facilities have become dilapidated owing to lack of maintenance or abandonment following the mass displacement of populations to safer areas. This has been especially evident in the west of the country.

17. The seizure and forceful occupation of schools is of concern. On 12 June 2006, more than 100 individuals of a pro-Government militia group known as the Groupe des patriotes pour la paix (GPP) occupied the Centre d'écoute pilot d'Adjamé, a children's centre in Abidjan. The occupation lasted until 17 June, when the national gendarmerie intervened following strong condemnation and concerted United Nations advocacy. No children were found on the premises at the time of the seizure, and no injury or loss of life was reported.

18. It should also be noted that the Ministry of Family and Social Welfare reported that the GPP militia group in 2003 had also occupied l'Institut de formation d'education feminine, a vocational training centre for girls and young women in

Adjamé. The occupation lasted through 2005, when the Government regular army, FANCI, evicted GPP and took over the premises. The Centre has since served as a military base pending its restoration as a school.

E. Rape or other grave sexual violence

19. The prevailing insecurity and the deterioration of social and administrative infrastructure as a result of the conflict have contributed significantly to high levels of sexual violence against girls and women in Côte d'Ivoire. The climate of impunity for crimes of sexual violence has also exacerbated the problem. Furthermore, programmatic interventions for affected children are hampered by the lack of reliable data on the full scale of such violations.

20. Between May and July 2005 the UNOCI Human Rights Division recorded incidents and reports of approximately 200 cases of sexual violence against children and women, with 41 per cent of the cases involving alleged rape. A 2005 UNFPA study established that 31 per cent of the girls interviewed admitted to having been forced or coerced into non-consensual sexual relations. Meanwhile, such factors as poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities have resulted in many girls becoming engaged in prostitution as means of survival.

21. A number of reports have established the existence of child-trafficking networks for the purpose of prostitution, operating in several locations in both FAFN-controlled areas (Vavoua) and the zone of confidence, as well as in Abidjan, Daloa, Yamoussoukro and San Pedro. Although names of individuals involved in such trafficking have been cited, no arrest has been made.

22. The following cases reflect trends of sexual violence against children:

(a) On 17 November 2005 a 15-year-old girl was reportedly raped in a neighbourhood in Belville II, Bouaké. The child was among five girls who confirmed to human rights officers that they were employed as dancers and prostitutes in the neighbourhood;

(b) On 18 December 2005 a 17-year-old girl was reportedly sexually assaulted in Guiglo by nine unidentified men. No progress has been reported on the investigation opened by the gendarmerie;

(c) On 5 March 2006 a 15-year-old girl was repeatedly raped in Alépé by an element of the Centre de commandement des operations sécuritaires. An investigation has been opened by the gendarmerie, but no progress has been reported;

(d) The United Nations registered deep concerns with the leadership of FAFN over the rape in March 2006 of a 14-year-old girl in Bouaké while she was being held in FAFN custody. The case led to the issuance of an FAFN command order to end child detention, cited in section VI below;

(e) On 26 June 2006 UNOCI human rights officers reported the alleged rape of a 15-year-old schoolgirl in Danané by a member of FAFN. A staff member of the school informed UNOCI that incidents of rape were rampant in the school, but parents preferred to stay silent for fear of reprisals.

F. Denial of humanitarian access

23. During the period under review there was no systematic denial of humanitarian access for children by parties to the conflict.

IV. Establishment of monitoring and reporting mechanism

24. Significant progress has been made in establishing a monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations of children's rights in Côte d'Ivoire pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005). Over the past year, among the United Nations partners on the ground, planning and preparation for the establishment of the mechanism and the implementation of other aspects of the resolution have taken place in the framework of the protection network of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Coordination Committee. In September 2006 the National Task Force on the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism was established, comprised primarily of United Nations entities of the protection network. The Task Force is co-chaired by my Deputy Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire and the UNICEF Country Representative, with the mandate to oversee progress in the implementation of resolution 1612 (2005). The Task Force is responsible for the submission of bimonthly and annual reports on grave violations for consideration by the Security Council. In addition, UNICEF established a child protection forum in February 2006 comprising the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and operational international child protection non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which, in conjunction with the protection network, will collaborate with the Task Force.

25. The UNOCI child protection adviser has established a systematic briefing and training programme for the UNOCI military, police and civilian sections in order to prime the peacekeeping operation to contribute to the monitoring and reporting mechanism. This has entailed the dissemination of and briefings on the provisions of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) and more specific training on child protection, including information-gathering on and verification of the six grave violations set out in paragraph 1. In this regard, specific child protection focal points have been appointed among peacekeeping contingents, United Nations military observers, United Nations police and UNOCI human rights officers to liaise with the child protection adviser on the collection of timely, accurate, reliable and objective information on grave violations. The information gathered by UNOCI sources is screened and classified in a database to facilitate tracking and follow-up of cases. Under the UNOCI budget for 2006/07, it is anticipated that 10 national child protection officers and 4 United Nations volunteer child protection officers will be recruited to support efforts in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), augmenting the Child Protection Section, which presently consists of the child protection adviser and one internationally recruited child protection officer.

26. UNICEF continues to brief partner NGOs on Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), as well as the Ministry of Family, militia groups and the FAFN leadership. UNICEF has also supported training workshops for 42 designated FAFN focal points and local national NGOs responsible for programme implementation. UNICEF presently has two international protection officers, one of whom works exclusively on the monitoring and reporting mechanism, as well as five national

child protection officers. UNICEF is in the process of establishing a West Africa regional information management system in collaboration with UNHCR, Save the Children and the International Rescue Committee, which will focus on cross-border monitoring of incidents of violations of children's rights.

V. Progress on dialogue with parties to conflict

A. Dialogue with the armed forces of the Forces nouvelles on an action plan to end the use of child soldiers

27. Upon the adoption by the Security Council of its resolution 1612 (2005) in July 2005, the UNOCI Child Protection Section notified all components of the mission and advised relevant peacekeeping personnel to disseminate information on the resolution as well as resolution 1539 (2004) with commanders of FAFN, FANCI and pro-Government militia groups. On 22 August 2005 UNOCI held a meeting with representatives of FAFN in Bouaké, during which they were reminded that the use of child soldiers had prompted the inclusion of FAFN on the list of violators annexed to my report of 9 February 2005 (A/59/695-S/2005/72). Copies of the report were handed over to FAFN, which was also advised that under the provisions of the above-mentioned resolutions, the Council had requested the preparation and implementation, without delay, of a time-bound action plan to halt the recruitment and use of child soldiers. It was stressed that the action plan must be implemented in full collaboration with the United Nations presence in Côte d'Ivoire. The FAFN leadership committed to full compliance with Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1539 (2004). Subsequent dialogue with UNOCI and UNICEF, with the active participation of UNICEF headquarters and the Office of my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, resulted in the submission on 26 November 2005 of a comprehensive action plan by the leadership of FAFN to my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire committing them to ending the association of children with their fighting forces.

28. Under the action plan, FAFN has committed to: (a) ending the use of child soldiers and releasing all children within their ranks; (b) cooperating with the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme on children's issues; (c) carrying out specific measures to prevent the recruitment of children; (d) designating a high-level focal point to liaise with the United Nations team during the implementation of the action plan; (e) defining time-bound benchmarks for measuring progress and compliance; (f) issuing formal instructions through their chain of command that reflect commitments contained in the action plan; and (g) providing access for the United Nations to verify progress in the implementation of the action plan.

29. The leadership of FAFN has since formally reconfirmed its commitment to my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire and to fully cooperate in completing the implementation of the action plan and to hand over all demobilized children to UNICEF in order to ensure adequate care and the necessary follow-up in coordination with the national disarmament demobilization and reintegration programme. On 1 July 2006 the FAFN leadership submitted a report to my Special Representative outlining actions taken towards full implementation of the action plan. In the report, General Soumaila Bakayoko declared that there were no more

children associated with fighting forces in the military zones of Bouaké and Katiola and that efforts were ongoing to identify and hand over to UNICEF children associated with their fighting forces in the remaining eight military zones under the control of the Forces nouvelles. General Bakayoko has requested UNOCI to refer to him directly any information on the reassociation of children with the fighting forces in Bouaké and Katiola for prompt action. In his report, the General also emphasized the constraints in identifying and demobilizing children beyond Bouaké, Katiola and Man owing to a lack of resources to extend the process into the remaining seven zones under his control.

30. A verification mechanism is in the process of being established by UNOCI and UNICEF to ascertain compliance. The UNICEF-led Verification Commission will commence visits to Bouaké and Katiola in October 2006, and UNOCI will complement the work of the Commission through the continued daily monitoring activities of military observers, United Nations police and the Human Rights Division, under the guidance of the UNOCI Child Protection Section.

B. Dialogue with militias on an action plan to end the use of child soldiers

31. With the exception of armed civil defence groups in the west and GPP in Abidjan, it is not known how many militia groups are operational in areas under the control of the Government. Where groups may be suspected of recruiting and using children, as is the case in San Pedro, for instance, the establishment of a viable dialogue in the framework of the resolutions of the Security Council on children and armed conflict has been hampered by the difficulties inherent in identifying the chain of command. Efforts to successfully identify militia groups, specify their chains of command and establish dialogue with them towards prevention of recruitment and use of children requires commitment and backing by the Government and FPI.

32. The national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme has agreed with UNOCI and UNICEF on the need to ensure purposeful engagement with militia groups for the preparation and implementation of action plans to end the recruitment and use of children as an adequate framework for effective demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of children. The programme has played a leading role in the dialogue with militia groups, particularly since the attacks against United Nations personnel in January 2006, which made it more difficult for such personnel to function in the west. The programme has made it explicitly clear to the leaders of the militia groups that disarmament negotiations must include child-specific provisions in application of Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005). To date, the programme has identified and listed 100 children formerly associated with the militia groups and provided this information to UNICEF to ensure adequate support for those children. Eleven other children were identified among 980 militias disarmed in Guiglo during the month of August.

33. A joint initiative of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, UNOCI and UNICEF has resulted in a commitment to an action plan by four militia groups in the west of Côte d'Ivoire, namely, FLGO, APWE, UPRGO

and MILOCI. On 14 September those groups formally signed the action plan, addressed to the Prime Minister and my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire.

34. Under the plan the four militia groups agreed: (a) to release all children within their ranks; (b) to cooperate with the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme on children's issues; (c) to take specific measures to prevent the recruitment of children; (d) to designate a high-level focal point to liaise with the United Nations team and the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme during the implementation of the action plan; (e) to define time-bound benchmarks in consultation with the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, UNOCI and UNICEF for measuring progress and compliance; (f) to issue formal instructions through their chain of command reflecting commitments contained in the action plan; and (g) to allow unhindered access by the United Nations team and the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for monitoring and verification.

35. It should be noted that although the militia groups acknowledge the fact that children may be associated with their forces in different capacities, they deny actively recruiting child soldiers.

36. Furthermore, it should be noted that these action plans by FAFN and militia groups in territories under Government control are the first such action plans to be negotiated by the United Nations under the explicit framework established by the Security Council under resolution 1612 (2005), and as such should be afforded due consideration for lessons learned and best practices. It will now be critical to ensure that the commitments that have been made by the parties to the conflict begin to translate into tangible protection for children on the ground.

VI. Follow-up and programmatic response

37. As the leading child-protection agency in Côte d'Ivoire, UNICEF has placed particular emphasis and focus on its interventions for the protection of vulnerable children, advocacy for the prevention of recruitment of children by armed forces and groups and monitoring and reporting of grave children's rights violations. UNICEF has actively sought to engage with the parties to the conflict and to elicit commitments from them to end recruitment and to release children associated with fighting forces and groups. These efforts over the past several years have been an important foundation for the most recent dialogue, which has resulted in the concrete achievement of action plans by the parties to the conflict.

38. In pursuing its operational mandate, UNICEF has collaborated closely with other United Nations agencies, such as the World Food Programme (WFP), UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, that undertake child-related programming under the purview of their own mandates and responsibilities. UNICEF advocates with partners to ensure mainstreaming and prioritization of children's concerns in their activities. In addition, the close collaboration of UNICEF with relevant child-protection experts within UNOCI has yielded significant results in terms of critical child protection priorities established by UNICEF. Ensuring and fostering complementarity of efforts remains a critical priority.

39. To date, demobilization and reintegration activities have been implemented in areas controlled by both the Forces nouvelles and the Government. Creating protective community spaces and providing psychosocial support to help children to recover over time have been an important priority. A total of 4,718 internally displaced children have benefited from psychosocial programming, including recreational and educational activities, as well as health interventions in areas controlled by the Forces nouvelles and the Government and in the zone of confidence.

40. UNICEF currently facilitates the rehabilitation and reintegration of 1,194 ex-child soldiers and other vulnerable children in these areas. Moreover, a separate programme is in progress to support 600 self-demobilized children in Danané who received military training during the conflict from pro-FAFN Liberian fighters. Meanwhile, in territories under Government control, 400 children formerly associated with militia groups in the west (Guiglo) continue to benefit from UNICEF-sponsored programmes. The UNICEF rehabilitation and reintegration plan for 2006 targets 3,000 ex-child soldiers and other vulnerable children (including 800 girls) affected by the conflict in areas under the control of FAFN and militia groups. The financial support pledged by the Work Bank for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme will be of significant assistance in the rehabilitation and reintegration of children associated with fighting forces. It is anticipated that out of the $90,308,291 committed by the World Bank for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, $2,702,955 is earmarked for children associated with fighting forces. Out of the total $596,742 of UNDP funds allocated to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration by the Government of Norway, $143,413 is devoted to child soldiers and other children affected by the conflict in support of UNICEF programming. Furthermore, other UNDP funds allocated to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration by the European Union/Commission since 2004 take into account the equipment and functioning of two transit and orientation centres for youths and child soldiers in Man and Bouaké in terms of supplying food and non-food items in the amount of $366,744.

41. UNICEF is developing advocacy and training activities to prevent, protect and rehabilitate child victims of sexual violence. There are a number of critical challenges for effective programming for children in this regard, including inadequate redeployment of qualified social services personnel; a lack of reliable and disaggregated data on vulnerable groups in areas controlled by the Government and the Forces nouvelles; and difficulties in developing with partners an integrated and coordinated response. UNOCI and UNICEF continue to advocate concertedly with relevant authorities to rigorously investigate and prosecute rape and other grave sexual violations against children to redress the prevailing sense of impunity of perpetrators.

42. UNOCI has strongly advocated that FAFN address the serious concern of detention of large numbers of children in areas under their control. As a result, the leadership of FAFN issued a command order on 30 April 2006 instructing an immediate end to the detention of children in areas under their control, pending the restoration of the administration of justice. The command order made exceptions for murder, rape and armed robbery allegedly perpetrated by children. With regard to such cases, the competent agencies and non-governmental organizations would be alerted and consulted for advice. Also, where children are suspected of recidivism for minor offences or serious antisocial behaviour, a case file will be shared with

competent agencies and non-governmental organizations for their advice and intervention. To implement this commitment by FAFN, the command order has been broadly disseminated to United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and UNOCI human rights officers, military observers, United Nations police and rule of law/prison officers for reference and advocacy for release of children during monitoring activities. The implementation of this command order will be an important stopgap measure of protection for children in areas under the control of FAFN, even as the need to restore administrative justice systems remains a critical priority.

43. With regard to the destruction and deterioration of education infrastructure as a result of the conflict, the UNICEF education programme, which is focusing on ensuring access to education for children, has also included support for the physical rehabilitation of schools. UNICEF will support 107 school rehabilitation projects through 2006. In response to this critical situation and a strong appeal from the Ivorian School Management Committees, UNOCI in 2004/05 spent 35 per cent ($260,000) of its quick-impact project budget on the rehabilitation of buildings, benefiting 24 schools. In the budget year 2005/06, the quick-impact project commitment was increased to $389,893 to benefit 36 rehabilitation projects in the education sector.

44. UNICEF has also collaborated with partners in other important interventions for children, including in the area of nutrition. In December 2005 WFP was assisting 10,000 orphans and other vulnerable children, including former child soldiers. WFP also administered a selected feeding programme that benefited approximately 4,000 malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women. WFP currently supports 12,690 beneficiaries with family rations, of which 2,538 are orphans and the remainder are vulnerable children in families. A further 4,520 orphans and vulnerable children in institutions are being assisted. Therapeutic and supplementary feeding activities are benefiting 2,885 malnourished children and 600 caretakers of children in therapeutic feeding centres. Some 1,650 pregnant and lactating women are supported through mother and child health activities. WFP is also providing school feeding rations to about 565,000 children during the 2005/06 school year. UNICEF has also supported the rehabilitation of 28 health structures and is planning to upgrade another 113 health centres throughout the country.

45. In regard to child trafficking, it should be noted that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire has taken important steps towards addressing this issue by playing a lead role in the adoption of a multilateral agreement against trafficking in children, signed by nine countries in the subregion, on 27 July 2005. A regional commission has also been established in Abidjan to follow up on the implementation of the agreement, which will contribute to more effective protection of children.

VII. Recommendations

46. I am deeply concerned by the grave violations being committed with impunity against children in Côte d'Ivoire, and I call upon all parties to the conflict to abide by the applicable international obligations for the protection of children. I call upon all parties to the conflict to encourage social cohesion among ethnic groups and communities, the ongoing conflict among them is taking a tremendous toll on the

lives and well-being of children and preventing the voluntary return of internally displaced persons to their homes.

47. I welcome the commitment by FAFN to a concrete, time-bound action plan to end use of child soldiers in compliance with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005), commend FAFN for its full cooperation with the United Nations to identify and release children associated with their fighting forces and to put in place measures to prevent the recruitment of children in Bouaké and Katiola and stress the importance of FAFN ensuring the implementation of similar measures in the remaining military zones under their control.

48. I also welcome the recent signing of action plans to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers by a number of pro-Government militia groups in western Côte d'Ivoire (FLGO, APWE, UPRGO and MILOCI) and stress the importance of those groups continuing to cooperate fully with the United Nations to implement the action plans without delay. I also call upon the Government and FPI to support the United Nations in identifying other pro-Government militia groups and their chains of command in order to establish dialogue towards the preparation and implementation of similar action plans by them. I urge UNICEF and other United Nations entities, together with relevant national institutions such as the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, to ensure adequate provision of support and programmes for the rehabilitation and reintegration of all released children.

49. Furthermore, it should be noted that these action plans to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers by FAFN and militia groups in territories under Government control are among the first such action plans to be negotiated by the United Nations under the explicit framework established in Security Council resolution 1612 (2005). As such I urge relevant United Nations actors in Côte d'Ivoire to report to the Security Council on lessons learned and best practices in this regard.

50. I am deeply disturbed by the prevailing culture of impunity for grave violations against children, especially sexual violence against girls. I urge the Government and the Forces nouvelles to ensure the rigorous and timely investigation of incidents and the prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against children. I call upon the international community and the Security Council to take concrete and targeted measures against parties and individuals who systematically commit such grave violations against children.

51. I am deeply concerned by the absence of a system for the administration of justice in areas under the control of the Forces nouvelles and invite all parties to conflict to expedite the peace process and restore State authority across the country. As a stopgap measure for the protection of children, I welcome the decision by FAFN to issue a command order calling for an end to the illegal detention of children in areas under their control and the timely referral of alleged cases of serious crimes by children or repeat offences to relevant child protection authorities.

52. I commend the progress of UNOCI, UNICEF and other United Nations partners in the implementation of the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations of children's rights in Côte d'Ivoire, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution 1612 (2005). I urge continued close collaboration of all relevant actors to determine and agree on a division of responsibilities in order to meet the

challenges for full implementation of the mechanism and response to violations as a matter of priority. I encourage relevant non-governmental organization partners and national authorities to collaborate with the United Nations in monitoring, reporting and response as appropriate.

53. I call upon the international community, and donors in particular, to provide adequate and timely assistance for programmes of rehabilitation and reintegration of all children associated with fighting forces in Côte d'Ivoire so as to ensure the long-term sustainability and success of such efforts and to support especially national initiatives in this regard.

54. I encourage my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire to continue to give close and special attention to the plight of children and to advocate concertedly for the implementation of and compliance with the resolutions of the Security Council on children and armed conflict.